

Message Text

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BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, UR, US, CSCE

SUBJECT: REVISED SOVIET TRAVEL REGULATIONS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 611; (B) MOSCOW 563

1. AS PART OF ONGOING ALLIED CONSULTATIONS ON MATTERS OF
MUTUAL INTEREST AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, ON DEVELOPMENTS
RELATED TO CSCE, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF
POLADS EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE NEW SOVIET TRAVEL REGULATIONS
ANNOUNCED LAST MONTH. WE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED
IN THE ALLIES' ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOVIET
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MOVE AS WELL AS POSSIBLE RESPONSES ALLIES ARE CONTEMPLATING.

2. TO INITIATE SUCH A DISCUSSION, MISSION MAY DRAW AS
APPROPRIATE ON REF A--LESS LAST TWO SENTENCES IN PARA 16--
AND REF B (BEING REPEATED TO USNATO). MISSION SHOULD
MAKE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS:

-COMMENTS CONTAINED REF A REPRESENT AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIBERALIZATION OF TRAVEL CONTROLS. THE DEPARTMENT IS MAKING A DETAILED STUDY OF THE NEW TRAVEL REGULATIONS TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT AND PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THE CHANGES.

-- THE SOVIETS DID NOT RESPOND TO AN APRIL 1976 UNILATERAL US INITIATIVE OPENING TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED AREAS IN THE US WHICH HAD BEEN CLOSED TO OFFICIAL SOVIET PERSONNEL IN 1974 IN RETALIATION FOR SOVIET CLOSURE OF CHINESE BORDER AREAS. AT THE TIME WE INFORMED THE SOVIETS THAT THE APRIL 1976 MOVE WAS BEING TAKEN IN LIGHT OF CSCE PROVISIONS AND IN ORDER TO MOVE TOWARDS THE MUTUAL RELAXATION OF TRAVEL CONTROLS. IN PART, THE NEW SOVIET REGULATIONS MAY BE RELATED TO THIS EARLIER US INITIATIVE.

-- THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT APPROACHED US ABOUT A CORRESPONDING RELAXATION OF US RESTRICTIONS ON SOVIET TRAVEL, NOR DID THEY FORMALLY LINK THE MOVE TO CSCE IN INFORMING US OF THE NEW TRAVEL REGULATIONS.

-- POSSIBLE FURTHER RELAXATION OF US TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ARE BEING CONSIDERED IN THE WAKE OF THIS SOVIET ACTION. AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT MOSCOW WOULD BE WILLING OR ABLE TO GO MUCH FURTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN EASING TRAVEL CONTROLS IN THE NEAR FUTURE SINCE THE NEW REGULATIONS MOST LIKELY REPRESENT THE PRODUCT OF EXTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY.

-- WE WOULD APPRECIATE ALLIED VIEWS ON THE PRACTICAL EFFECT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS WELL AS ON WHETHER THEY PLAN TO RESPOND TO THE SOVIET INITIATIVE.

3. FOR USDEL CSCE: PLEASE ADVISE DEPT AND OTHER ADDRESSEES IF AND IN WHAT CONTEXT SOVIET DELEGATION HAS ALLUDED TO REVISED TRAVEL REGULATIONS DURING COURSE OF BELGRADE MEETING.

VANCE

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